

THE WILD CASCADES

FEBRUARY 1992





THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Fluharty

1991 was a tough but good year for issues of concern to NCCC members. No, we did not see resolution of the Ancient Forest issues or designation of new Wilderness areas. However, several long simmering issues advanced to new stages on their way to resolution.

Lake Chelan National Recreation Area Suit

The long-standing suit over the adequacy of National Park Service (NPS) planning and evaluation of environmental impacts was settled by agreement that the NPS would reassess its plans and their impacts. As reported earlier in *The Wild Cascades*, this is one of the first times the NPS has been challenged on the adequacy of its planning actions. In the view of NCCC the successful settlement sets a valuable precedent that will help us and other groups working on national park issues to gain consideration of cumulative effects of resource management and land protection plans. NCCC is extremely grateful to the Chelan-born Stephan Volker of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund for his expert legal assistance on this case. As a former seasonal ranger in Stehekin, Volker had intimate knowledge and appreciation of what NCCC wanted to achieve. His careful crafting of the settlement language with Department of Interior lawyer Robert Fulton provides the proper framework for the development of better management in LCNRA.

Skagit Project Relicensing

NCCC has been an important intervenor in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing of the Skagit River Project (Ross, Diablo and Gorge Dams) of the Seattle City Light (SCL). In the early and mid-70s NCCC led the opposition to raising Ross Dam as part of the relicensing. Eventually, High Ross was put on a long-term hold by the US/Canada Treaty in 1984 confirming an agreement in 1983 between Seattle City Light and the Province of British Columbia. In the meantime, SCL operated the Projects under an annual continuation of the license.

In 1988 FERC ordered SCL to complete and submit its application for relicensing. This set in motion an intense effort by SCL and intervenors (NCCC, tribes, state and federal agencies) to evaluate the continuing impacts of the dams and transmission lines and to develop a package of proposed mitigation measures. This involved design of studies, participation in on-site assessment, and extensive negotiation. We got legal advice from Rick Aramburu and Tom Brucker, who defended NCCC's interests so ably in the 1970s, as well as advice from Fayette Krause of The Nature Conservancy and Saul Weisberg of North Cascades Institute. Still it was up to Joe and Margaret Miller, Dick Brooks, Pat Goldsworthy and yours truly to represent NCCC at hours of meetings and on hundreds of telephone calls. We ended up with a settlement among all of the intervenors and SCL on a package of mitigation measures to be performed as a condition of the issuance of a new license by FERC. If FERC accepts the package we will still need to participate in monitoring the implementation of many parts of the agreement -- but we are far ahead of having to fight our way through a long and tortuous FERC proceeding. (See detailed article in this issue, "The Matter of the Skagit".)

On the agenda for 1992 are many items:

- * We must persist with our appeals of inadequate US Forest Service Plans.
- * We must pursue all aspects of the planning processes and Environmental Impact Assessment for LCNRA.
- * We must support the NPS in its dealings with Chelan County and encourage the County to adopt a cooperative approach to planning for the future of LCNRA.
- * We must convince Congress to provide additional funding for purchase of land from willing sellers in LCNRA.
- * We must push for legislation protecting the remaining ancient forests in the Cascades.
- * Comcomitantly we must support measures to help communities adjust to changing conditions in timber supply through employment in environmental restoration.

Thanks go to all you NCCC members who have stuck with the organization through the years that it has taken to get to this point. Obviously, we are not done yet. We will need your continued letter writing and financial support to strengthen NCCC's effort to protect the Cascades. In addition we need you to tell others about NCCC and its work. Please encourage your friends to join NCCC. We can always use new people willing to learn the issues, develop solutions and push for their implementation.

NORTH CASCADES WILDERNESS LOSES A FRIEND

Bill Lester, Wilderness District Manager of North Cascades National Park, is leaving the Northwest to accept a post as Chief Ranger at Pinnacles National Monument, California. Bill, who came from Olympic National Park in 1978 as Skagit District Backcountry Ranger, has left his mark on North Cascades as few other National Park personnel have done.

He brought the struggling revegetation program in the park to a high level of efficiency and national recognition, often in the face of official indifference. Despite greatly increased climbing activity, not matched with increased staffing, his well trained backcountry staff have made the often hazardous North Cascades a safer place. When the inevitable accidents did occur, rescues were mounted smoothly and skillfully.

Bill's primary concern during all the years of his tenure in North Cascades has been management of the wilderness resource in such a way as to pass it on unimpaired to future generations. When he became District Manager of the entire park wilderness, he brought the differing practices of the Chelan District to the same high standards of the west side.

Pinnacles Monument is another strictly hiking and climbing park, with abundant birdlife, rugged geology and the many wildflowers of the Coast Range chaparral. Rather different country from the glaciers and alpine peaks of the North Cascades, but its jagged spires should offer opportunities for Bill's talents to be brought into play.

Bill, on behalf of NCCC, we thank you for all you have done for North Cascades wilderness over the past 14 years, and we wish you all the best in your new position. But we shall miss you!

North Cascades National Park Update

Hiring

The recruitment process for Chief Interpreter and Head of Natural Resource Management continues. Supt. Earnst reports he is pleased with the caliber of applicants. Results are expected fairly soon in the Interpreter position. The natural resource management position will take longer.

(NCCC comment: It is unfortunate to have a gap in the natural resource position when major issues related to Skagit relicensing, development of the Geographical Information System and work on the Lake Chelan Plans and EIS are all pending).

Stehekin Road

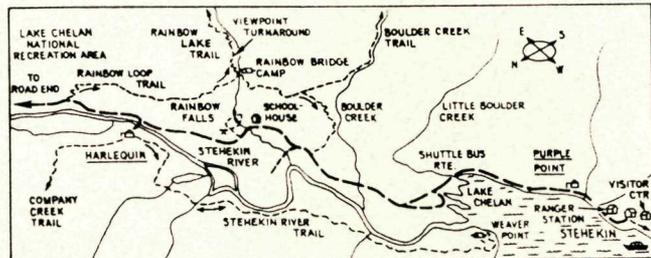
Supt. Earnst reports that the Solicitor's office is soon to make a recommendation on how to resolve the issue of Chelan County's efforts to regain control over the Stehekin Road. The NPS has maintained its ownership of the road based on legal documentation that the County ceded control in the early 1970s after designation of the NRA. The NPS has maintained the road for over 20 years at no expense to Chelan Co. or the residents of Stehekin.

(NCCC Comment: Chelan County's machinations on this issue require a large amount of NPS time and resources that could be spent more usefully on other management issues. This issue is symptomatic of many resource and land use management issues that the County continues to raise because it refuses to recognize the benefits that this nationally significant area brings its way).

Courtney Landing

As a result of meetings between the NPS and proponents of revision to a private dock in Stehekin considerable modifications have resulted which remove some of the most objectionable parts of the plans.

(NCCC comment: The Stehekin shore of Lake Chelan is considered a Conservancy Shoreline under the Shorelines Management Act and the Chelan Co. Plan. There needs to be renewed effort to develop a long term plan for this shoreline area with respect to provision of visitor services and protection of scenic and wildlife attributes.)



Lake Chelan from Rainbow Lake trail (Harvey Manning photo)



EARNST RESPONDS TO N3C CONCERNS

January 6, 1992

Mr. David Fluharty, President
North Cascades Conservation Council
7217 Sycamore Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98117

Dear Dave:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain to your members and readers our reasons for reopening the Stehekin Valley Road last summer after the November 1990 storms.

As you explained in your account of the situation in the October issue of *"The Wild Cascades,"* we knew there was damage to the entire length of the road from the landing to Cottonwood. We also knew the damage to the lower portions of the road was extensive. What we didn't know was how serious the damage was to the higher reaches. We were unable to assess the damage above High Bridge because of the heavy snowfall which covered that portion of the road.

Snowfall during the winter of 1990-1991 was heavier than normal and cool temperatures and additional snowfall continued into the spring of 1991. These conditions prevented us from getting accurate information about road conditions above High Bridge until late in the season. When the snow finally melted, we discovered that the damage was not as extensive as we had earlier suspected. Based on our evaluation of estimated costs, it seemed reasonable to reopen the road to Cottonwood.

The full cost of reopening the Stehekin Valley Road from the landing to Cottonwood was \$112,000. Approximately \$66,000 of this amount was needed to repair an extensive washout eight miles from the landing and well below High Bridge. Emergency repairs from High Bridge to Cottonwood cost \$34,600. Two thousand cubic yards of gravel were used for repairs on the entire 22 miles of road; of this amount, approximately 900 cubic yards was used on the 11-mile stretch between High Bridge and Cottonwood.

In making our decision, we paid careful attention to the Consent Decree; our intent being to comply with the letter and spirit of our agreement with N3C about interim management measures during preparation of an EIS for the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area. It was our opinion that the actions necessary to reopen the road between High Bridge and Cottonwood were clearly covered by the terms of the Consent Decree and that a decision to close the road in these circumstances in the midst of an ongoing EIS process would have been arbitrary and not supported by the facts.

Again, according to the terms of the Consent Decree, the final status of the road will be determined in the EIS process and through development of a revised General Management Plan. Public input is an important element in preparation for these documents. The actions taken this past year to reopen the road were interim measures. They do not represent a commitment of resources that predetermines the fate of the road.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this issue and explain what took place in 1991.

Sincerely,

/s/ John R. Earnst
Superintendent

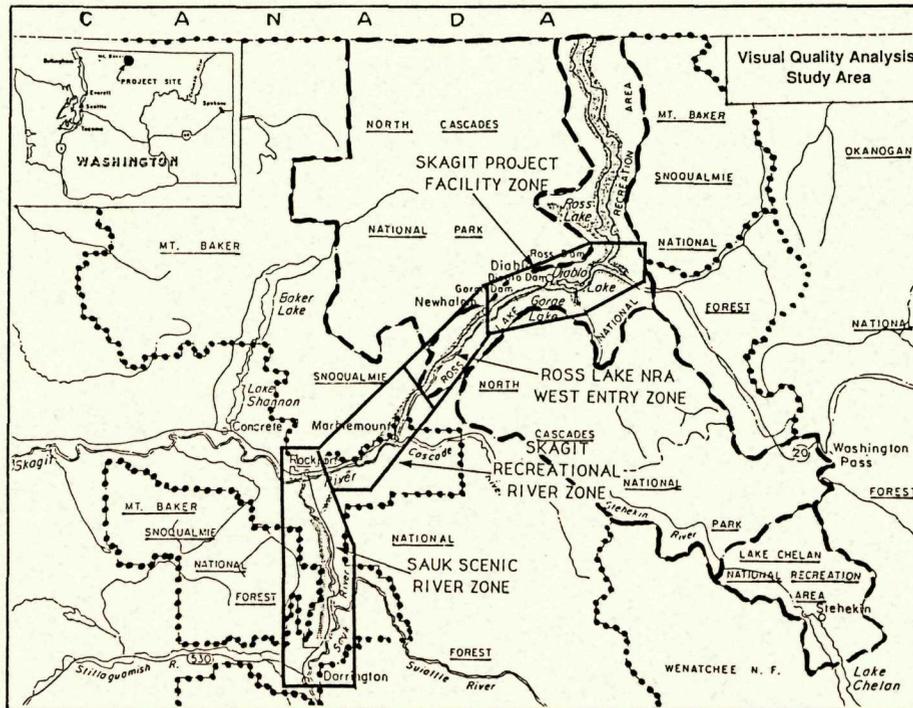


THE MATTER OF THE SKAGIT

THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL AND THE SKAGIT HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT -- 1968-1992

DAVID L. FLUHARTY

THIS IS THE FIRST OF A THREE-PART SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE SKAGIT HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT -- ROUND II. Round I, you will recall, began in 1968 with the North Cascades Conservation Council opposition to raising Ross Dam and further flooding Big Beaver Valley and the Canadian Skagit. Details of that heroic battle are in previous issues of *The Wild Cascades* and will be recounted in Harvey Manning's forthcoming book. In Round II we discuss the resumption of negotiations with Seattle City Light (SCL) and the -- so far so good -- successful mitigation package worked out for the relicensing. This first installment begins at the end of the North Cascades Conservation Council's litigation in the late 1970s, documents the revolution of the High Ross issue and describes the study stage of the present relicensing. The second installment (Round III) will review issues in the negotiations and the development of NCCC strategy for the settlement process. The third installment (Round IV) will cover the settlement and its implementation.



ROUND II

Relicensing of the Skagit Hydroelectric Project (FERC #553)

The North Cascades Conservation Council emerged from its legal battles with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) declaring victory in 1980. However, the nature of this victory was odd; we lacked a court decision blocking High Ross. FERC decided that High Ross Dam could be built. The expenses of the fray were substantial even with the generous help of lawyers

. . . without NCCC intervention, High Ross would have been built. . . .

Rick Aramburu and Tom Brucker and the tireless technical work of Dick Brooks and Ted Beck. How, then, was this a victory? Because without NCCC intervention, High Ross would have been built. However, due to passage of time and NCCC hammering on the lack of merit for the proposal, political and environmental opposition in the U.S. and especially in Canada had elevated the issue to an international level and forced reevaluation of the High Ross.

A decline in the rate of increase in energy demand and the availability of lower cost alternatives to High Ross construction worked in favor of rethinking the Seattle City Light proposals. These arguments were essentially those maintained by NCCC in its years of dogged resistance in the Seattle City Council, FERC, and the U.S. Court of Appeals. NCCC's voice of reason had to wait to be heard until it was echoed by the utility, city, and other "independent" (read non-conservationist) economists and engineers who eventually crafted the settlement.

From the beginning, the basic NCCC position was the following:

1. High Ross would be an environmental disaster for Ross Lake National Recreation Area and the upper Skagit in Canada.
2. There were other lower cost options available to Seattle City Light for long-term energy supply than High Ross.
3. SCL energy demand projections were inflated and they overstated the need for High Ross.
4. Canada would receive the brunt of flooding from raising the Skagit but was getting very little compensation for its sacrifices.

While it was not intended that way, NCCC intervention to block High Ross on its merits resulted in sufficient delay for Canadian objections to feed into a change of governments in British Columbia. The new government refused to allow flooding of the Skagit but was willing to negotiate a solution in the form of power supply paid for by Seattle City Light investment in hydroelectric capacity in Canada.

Another Alternative

In the early 1980s, emphasis was on achieving agreement between SCL and BC Hydro to avoid having to build High Ross. Everyone forgot that the Skagit Project relicensing was still incomplete. The only action taken to mitigate the impacts of the operations of the projects was an interim flow agreement (1981) that sought to provide better conditions for anadromous fish in the Skagit. While important, this measure did not go very far to compensate for the wildlife, recreational, cultural and aesthetic losses due to the three dams and reservoirs and transmission corridor.

A good example of the kind of environmental damage that was being imposed by the Skagit Project could be seen in the enormous fluctuation (90-plus feet) of Ross reservoir. In the mid-1980s NCCC tried to get SCL to improve conditions for recreational activities and visual quality in the Ross Dam reservoir. Under "normal" operations, the reservoir level was usually low at the beginning of fishing season and by Labor Day the reservoir was already on its way down. NCCC requested that SCL bring the lake level up earlier and keep it high through the end of summer.

. . . we always suspected that filling the [Ross] reservoir earlier meant . . . generated revenues from sale of power to California or other parts of the power grid. . . .

NCCC would be "informed" by SCL that there was not enough water in the system to accommodate recreational and aesthetic interests, but we always suspected that filling the reservoir earlier meant that overproduction of power during the winter and dropping the reservoir in the summer generated revenues from sale of power to California or other parts of the power grid. Fiscally, these SCL actions may have made sense but the real costs were to the environment and its other users. NCCC requests for evidence that alternative reservoir operation approaches were infeasible or too costly were met by SCL with excuses like, it costs too much to perform the analysis, we lack the data to answer your questions, or, you would not understand. (Maybe we understood too well)!

International Treaty

In 1984, Canada and the U.S. approved a treaty recognizing agreement between Seattle City Light and British Columbia Hydro to allow a long-term transfer of electricity from Canada in lieu of payment by SCL of the equivalent capital cost of constructing increased generating capacity. More importantly, the agreement established an Environmental Endowment Fund of approximately \$5 million dollars (plus annual contributions tied to power production) to be administered by a joint Canada/US Commission charged:

- a) To conserve and protect wilderness and wildlife habitat;
- b) To enhance recreational opportunities in the Skagit Valley;
- c) To acquire mineral or timber rights consistent with conservation and recreational purposes;
- d) To conduct studies of need and feasibility of projects;
- e) To plan for and construct hiking trails, foot bridges, interpretive displays and the like;
- f) To cause the removal of stumps and snags in Ross Lake and on the shoreline as deemed appropriate, and the grooming and contouring of the shoreline, consistent with wildlife habitat protections; and
- g) To connect, if feasible, Manning Provincial Park and the North Cascades National Park by a trail system.

The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission (SEEC) provided funding for a variety of projects in the Skagit basin. NCCC Board Chairman, Patrick D. Goldsworthy, was appointed member of the U.S. delegation. However, this activity was not intended as mitigation for the impacts of the Skagit project. Since the expiration of the SCL license for the Skagit Project in 1977, FERC had given SCL annual extensions. In 1988, even FERC got tired of SCL delay and put the utility on notice that it must conduct a series of studies necessary to complete its application for relicensing in a timely manner. This prompted the start of Round II in the Skagit relicensing saga.

Change of Conditions

. . . at issue. . . . was . . . mitigation of impacts. . . of conversion of a wild river to a tame one.

Round I of the relicensing can be characterized as a bitter fight over the High Ross Dam proposed amendment. Formal interventions were filed with FERC by NCCC, tribes, state and federal resource management agencies. What was at issue? Fundamentally, it was the mitigation of impacts of wholesale conversion of a wild river to a tame one. At one time this was seen as an enormous advantage. Fifty years later, the cost to the environment and to society became obvious. *If this is not obvious, just imagine the outrage if SCL were proposing to build the Skagit Project today!*

In the more than 50 years that had passed since the Federal Power Commission (FPC) granted the original license, many changes had taken place. The passage of major environmental legislation set a vastly different scene for licensing of hydroelectric projects than that of the 1920s. In the 1920s the main issue was allocation of the sites among private and public utilities

wanting to develop the hydroelectric potential and to a lesser extent to control flooding. By the late 1980s many more interests were identified and governmental regulation had adopted a much different approach. The National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 meant that FERC's decision on relicensing must divulge the environmental impacts of the action and propose ways to mitigate them. In addition, other laws like the Endangered Species Act of 1972, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, etc., would now have to be incorporated in the FERC decision.

Besides these national changes in legislation, Congress established Ross Lake National Recreation Area (RLNRA) (1968) in recognition of the scenic splendor of the area. RLNRA is a giant chunk cut out of the heart of North Cascades National Park because SCL could prevail on Senator Jackson and other members of the Washington congressional delegation to eliminate it from the park. The Washington Parks Wilderness Act (1988) placed most of the terrestrial portions of RLNRA under statutory Wilderness. Still, the Skagit project reservoirs were excluded, at the request of SCL, from Wilderness designation. Even outside the park areas, the importance of the Skagit for wildlife is widely recognized -- Wild and Scenic River designation, Skagit River Bald Eagle Reserve, etc. The importance of the Skagit River for tribal fisheries and sports fisheries is incredible even in their currently diminished status.

Probably the most important change affecting Round II of the relicensing occurred in the staffing and leadership of SCL. The increased environmental regulation that affected hydroelectric operations in the late 1960s and early 1970s and SCL continual problems of compliance with them, prompted the creation of a new Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) in 1974. Its professional staff was charged with working within SCL to ensure compliance. Still a weak member in the power structure of SCL, EAD earned grudging acceptance for its expertise in guiding the utility through the increasingly complex technical environmental regulatory maze. EAD also garnered respect from conservation organizations for its honest brokering of environmental issues.

Change in top level leadership at SCL had brought Randy Hardy to the superintendent's desk. Whether or not he agreed with it, he understood the change in conditions and recognized that Round I of the relicensing had been an exercise in frustration. He saw the potential benefits that could be had by considering a wider range of alternative solutions than those seen by the Power Supply and Planning and Engineering Department of SCL. He also was a manager who relied on each of his Departments to do its job -- including EAD. When the FERC order came, Hardy aligned his staff and not only said go to work -- but said to go to work with all parties who had an interest in the relicensing and put together a mitigation package to which all agree on before submitting it to FERC.

SCL Proposal

When NCCC received the SCL correspondence inviting our participation in the studies for the relicensing the first reaction was a mixture of "I wonder what they are up to now?" and "Why should we do their work for them?". After the initial meetings with EAD we started to change our tune. It appeared that SCL was serious in wanting to perform the studies on the issue that the intervenors thought should be studied and that SCL wanted the studies performed at a standard that met intervenor demands. EAD was to be in charge of the studies and the later development of mitigation measures. After lengthy discussions with the NCCC legal advisors from Round I, NCCC agreed, in principle, to participate in the studies.

Once we agreed to participate our second reaction was, "What have we gotten ourselves into"? Remembering the extreme demands on time and organizational resources that the High Ross Round I relicensing required, we were loathe to commit to endless series of meetings. As an organization of volunteers, who could represent us at all the meetings? NCCC was the only intervenor which had no one employed to do this job. Wasn't our chief role that of the critic? It wasn't our job to forge the solution -- we should point the way. This could be done outside the process -- we can review the documents and comment.

FERC required studies on the following subjects:

1. Recreational facilities and needs
2. Visual quality
3. Wildlife
4. Migratory fisheries
5. Resident fisheries (in reservoir)
6. Erosion and slope stability
7. Archaeological and historic properties
8. Rare, threatened or endangered species of flora and fauna
9. Cultural and traditional properties

It was abundantly clear, that the way the studies got performed and the way that NCCC and others participated would determine the outcome of important issues. SCL would be unlikely to protect NCCC interests. FERC would be unlikely to protect issues of importance to NCCC. There was no question but that the North Cascades Conservation Council must participate.

For the second part of the Skagit story covering the NCCC strategy, read the June, 1992 issue of *The Wild Cascades*.

The New Wild Cascades

This February 1992 issue is a milestone in the publication history of the North Cascades Conservation Council. The new larger size format of *The Wild Cascades* gives us more space for articles and is less expensive to print. Moreover, you can expect to see it three times a year, (currently) February, June, and October. We would not be able to pursue such a publishing program without the strong support of all our members and special contributions above and beyond membership dues. We would especially like to thank Abigail Avery for her very generous gift to help cover publishing costs. The need for a strong membership base supporting our efforts continues. *The Wild Cascades* is more than a newsletter, it is a record of history of the area and the political forces that shape policy. Show *The Wild Cascades* to friends you think would be interested; better yet, have us give them a sample copy. Send in the following coupon along with your comments on the new look:

Please send a sample copy of *The Wild Cascades* to:

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The New State of Washington Wilderness-Like Areas

Harvey Manning

The 1987 state legislature adopted the Washington Natural Resources Conservation Areas Act. The primary purpose of the program is to protect outstanding examples of native ecosystems and habitat for endangered, threatened, and sensitive plants and animals. A secondary purpose is to provide opportunities for environmental education and low-impact public uses, where such uses do not adversely affect the resource values the area was intended to protect. The NRCA program was created to fill the large gap between Natural Area Preserves, where human uses are exceedingly limited, and State Parks, which serve a wide range of recreational activities, many of them distinctly high-impact.

The best protection previously available under state auspices was State Parks; what with the hardened pads of RV villages, "danger tree" logging (from which the profits go to harden more pads), conversion of wetlands to soccer fields, opening foot trails to "mountain bikes," and other bad habits (which badly need correction, but that's another campaign), the protection is all too often very far from good enough. The NRCA program is under the Department of Natural Resources, which during the regime of State Land Commissioner Bert Ol' King Cole was ill-famed for selling off state-owned tidelands, cutting every tree that it could get its saws on, and building razzerways for off-road vehicles, two-wheel, three-wheel, and 4x4. The NRCA initiatives by DNR abundantly demonstrate that Commissioner Brian Boyle is a whole other person, and that under his 11-year leadership (which has only one more year to go, since he is not seeking a fourth term) the DNR has become a whole other agency. (-- Well, "whole" is going a big strong; the ORVs still rule the Capitol Forest, the Tahuya Forest, the Ahtanum Multiple Use Area, and nearly every other DNR multiple-use unit except Tiger Mountain State Forest, and DNR timber sales and logging regulations leave something to be desired}.

. . . "LOW IMPACT" MAY NOT HAVE THE RESONANCE OF ZAHNISER, BUT IT CAN DO THE SAME JOB. . .

However, to focus not on the bitter but the better, the new NRCAs have the potential to resemble National Wilderness Areas. The details of managing individual units remain to be worked out by DNR staff and citizen advisory committees, but there will be no fear that human seas of heavy-impact lobbyists will crush the process; the 1987 Act restricts uses in much the same manner as the 1964 National Wilderness Act. No ORVs in a NRCA. No soccer fields. Indeed, not even school classes or hiking trails if these are shown to have an adverse effect. "Low impact" may not have the resonance of Zahniser language, but the phrase can do much the same job.

The DNR manages 5,000,000 acres of state land obtained via the Statehood Act and other means. Laws require most of this land to be exploited for income to the common schools and an array of other beneficiaries. However, legislative appropriations have "bought out" certain interests of beneficiaries and thereby released the NRCAs (as well as the companion Natural Area Preserves) for non-income management. As of October, 1991, there are 21 NRCAs, totalling 42,244 acres, and 35 Natural Area Preserves of 12,938 acres (some of these NAPS are part of NRCAs). Watch the system grow!

Oldest of the preserves is the Mount Si NRCA, established by earlier legislation which was much less protective than the new.

By and large, the environmental community as yet is barely aware of the new program which was established pretty much without its help, the impetus mainly from within the agency

(and there's a novelty!). Since the NRCA/NAP system now offers the highest protection available under state law, far superior to the State Parks, environmentalists are going to have to shift gears, retool their heads, and figure how to take advantage. The way to get started is to obtain a copy of the DNR map, Washington State Major Public Lands (call toll-free 1-800-527-3305). Spot the state lands you know have important ecosystems. Get up a campaign.

For example: Among the 35 new NAPs is a Chopaka Mountain Natural Area Preserve of 2645 acres. Bully. But the DNR proposed a much larger NRCA, intending an ultimate transfer to the Pasayten Wilderness which it adjoins on the east. News of the proposal reached the ears of the North Cascades Conservation Council as a "done deal," our help not needed. We were overjoyed, inasmuch as our desire to put Chopaka in wilderness dates back to the 1960s.

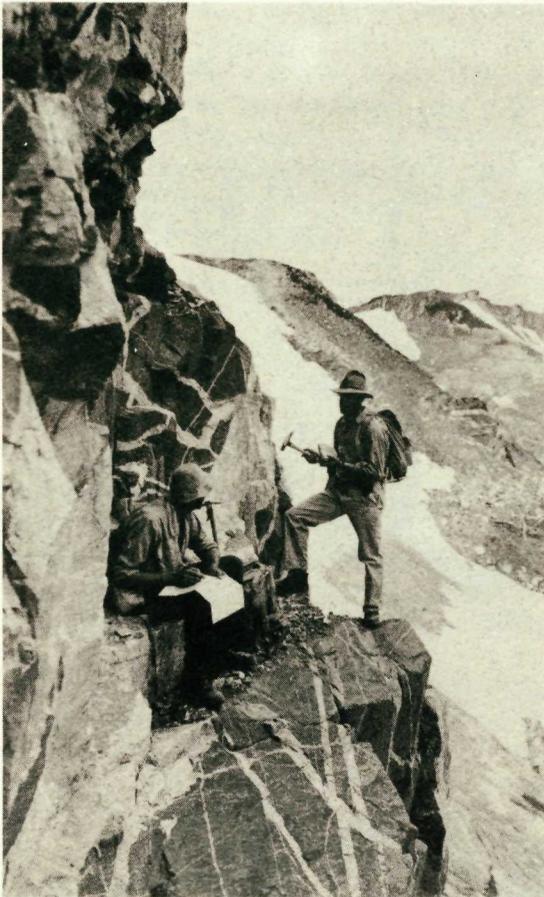
But then: A band of Okanogan cattlemen rode down on DNR staff and cowed them (sorry about that) into slashing the size of the proposal to a fraction, reducing the NRCA to a NAP. Had we been informed about the cavalry attack, we could have countered with an infantry stampede. -- Well, having just received such stupendous largesse from Brian Boyle and the DNR we will not be so ungrateful as to utter the word, "gutless." But next time ...

Chopaka. And elsewhere in DNR lands. For years to come we will be thanking the Brian Boyle era for the new opportunities.



THE MONSTER MOLY MINE THAT GOT AWAY

by the Irate Birdwatcher



WE (THE CONSERVATIONISTS IN CONSENSUS, THAT IS) omitted the Pickets from our national park proposal for two reasons. First, a Congressionally-designated wilderness administered by the U.S. Forest Service would be amply protective, since grazing and mining, permitted by the Aspinall-sabotaged Wilderness Act, were not credible threats; cows and sheep would find little to chew on in that craggy, icy land and prospectors had been so discouraged by distant views they'd scarcely ever gotten far enough in to bang two rocks together. Second, political practicality put an upper limit on acreage of the proposed park; priority had to be given the vulnerable areas around Glacier Peak and Eldorado-Lake Chelan where the Barbecuers* were pawing the ground, flashing their fangs and oozing drool.

Precisely because Fury, Terror, Redoubt et al had no goodies to set a Barbecuer's fat gut to rumbling, their minions in government, forced by public opinion to concede some sort of park, used the Pickets as a make-weight to give substance to flimflamming counter-proposals. The park that Governor Dan Evans tried to palm off on the nation consisted of the Pickets solely and only!

In the end, of course, when Senator Henry M. Jackson thrust in our face the legislation crafted (at his direction) by the Forest Service, and said, "Take it or leave it," we took it. We never had questioned the national-park caliber of the Pickets; our

argument had been that the rock and ice could defend themselves against Barbecuers, as could not the ancient forests that were being served up on a platter by the Jackson-Evans-Forest Service cabal.

So, in the period before the 1968 North Cascades Act there was a certain amount of subdued grumbling among our consensusites. Other grumbling was audible in the U.S. Geological Survey, which had been compelled by Congressman Aspinall to conduct a minerals inventory of the North Cascades Primitive Area before he would permit his House Interior Committee to consider reclassification, whether to wilderness (the Pasayten portion of the primitive area) or park (the Pickets portion). The geologists hated being diverted from their very pure science to become prospectors for Aspinall's very impure pals.

"It's not such a bad idea having the Pickets in a park."

In the summer of 1967 I received an unsigned postcard, mailed from a North Cascades hamlet, saying, simply and entirely, "It's not such a bad idea having the Pickets in a park." My hair stood on end. The anonymous informant doubtless was a Geological Survey scientist too honorable to breach agency rules of confidentiality. No need. He'd said enough to tell me the worst had happened. The Pickets were at risk. There was nothing I or the North Cascades Conservation Council could do, and nothing that Senator Jackson *would* do.

But something could somehow be done by somebody. Honorable though the government geologists were, certain of their lay employees had looser lips, and by good fortune a very attentive ear habituated the North Cascades, that of the late Alan Robert ("Bob" or "Bobby" or, when younger and lumpier, "Lardy") Grant. Bobby and I had begun our climbing together in 1948. By the 1960s I was in training as an irate birdwatcher and he had become a "dirty miner" -- in fact, the preeminent mining geologist in the Cascades. Our friendship thrived on exchanges of good-natured insults -- and on a mutual love for the North Cascades.

Though striving to help meet the nation's needs for metal, he did so in the framework of a land ethic much closer to mine than to Aspinall's -- or Kennicott's. One afternoon he flopped his Bear Creek Mining helicopter into our camp at White Rock Lakes. As a member of the Second Traverse party he had named the lakes. As one of Peter Misch's students he had done his thesis work here. Lounging in the meadows that afternoon, gazing across the gulf of West Fork Agnes to the glaciers of Dome Peak, he confided, "If I found an outcrop of pure copper six feet wide here, I wouldn't tell *them*."

He felt sure that if civilization endured long enough, it would need the copper-molybdenum ore of Miners Ridge -- but it didn't need it *now* and could afford to leave it in the bank -- in the ground -- until a more advanced technology and a greater social sensitivity would guarantee a less land-paining extraction than Kennicott had in mind. Companies from around the world came asking him to locate them a good mine in the North Cascades. He steered them elsewhere, warning that legions of irate birdwatchers lurked in those hills, whereas other areas were easy-open. His dream was to discover large bodies of low-grade ore in the Yacolt Burn, which in his opinion would be ecologically and esthetically improved by a batch of open-pit mines.

The bane of his scientific-professional existence was the infestation of his industry by self-proclaimed "miners" who came not to mine but to steal, close kin of Wall Street stockbrokers.

There was the promoter who once had the option on Dutch Miller's patented claims at La Bohn Gap, was peddling stock across the prairies of Saskatchewan, and hired Bob to help him sell more. Bob found the ore bodies to be isolated lobes, too small and too few to be economical to mine at such a distance from public roads. The promoter wailed his disbelief. Bob suggested confirmation could easily be provided by a little bit of drilling. The promoter vigorously shook his head and cried, "Oh no! I've seen too many good mines *ruined* by drilling!" Instead the promoter hired another "geologist", identified as such by his business card, though Bob's investigations revealed that his degree was from a tiny college that didn't have a geology curriculum. Never mind, he knew what the customer wanted. He pronounced the lobes to be leakages from the Mother Lode. From the data in this "geologist's" report, Bob calculated that the Mother Lode was centered in the sky 2000 feet above downtown Yakima.

During a reconnaissance of Sultan Basin, Bob was impressed by the Blank Mine, which boasted a ball mill, an aerial tram climbing a thousand vertical feet to the mine face, and an ore box loaded with rich sulfides. He asked to see the vein; permission denied; well, okay, miners have reason to be paranoid. Elsewhere in the basin Bob encountered an ancient chap who years before had settled down to spend the rest of his life squirming into his gopher hole, packing ore out to the mine mouth, and hammering off the country rock. Bob viewed his impressive heap of cleaned sulfides, the labor of decades of "high-grading", and remarked that a fair number of dollars were sitting there just begging to be trucked to the Tacoma Smelter. The ancient wasn't interested. Beans were cheap. He had a good life in his log cabin and gopher hole and at his ore table, banging rocks, hitching a ride to town every so often to pick up accumulated Social Security checks and buy beans. As for extra money, well, "Now and then the folks at Blank Mine stop by and I sell them a truckload." A number of years (and many shares) later, the Spokane Exchange suspended trading in Blank stock.

Bob loved mining, loved the wild Cascades, and hoped to help the two coexist. He hated crooks who were enemies of his loves and joyously finked on them to Forest Service and Park Service. But no help could be sought from these agencies when his spies reported that the ion counts in streams draining the Northern Pickets were enormously higher than in streams below Miners Ridge. The indicated ore body promised (threatened) to be far larger, much richer, and the 1872 Mining Law made it fair game for the first Barbecuer to pick up on the USGS "prospecting".

Thus it was that one fine day in the summer of 1967 Bobby and a climbing buddy took off in a chopper, landed (illegally) on the summit ridge of the Northern Pickets close by Mt. Fury, at a spot never previously attained by climbers and probably not visited since, and erected monuments. He intended to place monuments on Easy Ridge as well but the afternoon thermals ruled out landing so he tossed slips of paper out the window. "That's how we do a lot of our claiming. If anybody complains they can't find our monuments, we tell them those bad birdwatchers must've kicked them off the mountain."

The claims were duly filed at the Whatcom County Courthouse, and any person wishing to learn the name of the claimant can consult that register, but we will not name him here, out of respect for the eminence he subsequently achieved on the faculty of the

University of Washington. And so the Great Big Fury Moly Mine was saved from the dirty miners -- *by* a dirty miner and his confederate, a grubby forester, neither of them possessing any official status in the North Cascades Conservation Council.

Erecting monuments and filing papers in the county courthouse holds a claim only through Labor Day of the year following. Unless a stipulated amount of money (and/or time) has been spent on "improvements," the claim then lapses and is wide open again.

During the summer of 1968, as Congressman Wayne N. Aspinall and Senator Henry M. Jackson hurled defiance at each other from their redoubts respectively in House and Senate, and we alternately thrilled and shuddered at the latest rumors from Washington, D.C., never far from our thoughts was that arete of Fury. The day after Labor Day, would a horde of dirty miners pounce on the Pickets? We ourselves didn't feel up to climbing where no (non-helicoptered) climber ever had gone before -- and when we got there doing claim work.

Onward through September our split vision kept simultaneous watch on Congress and the Whatcom County Courthouse. Not until the October 1968 ceremony in the White House did we heave a deep, deep sigh.

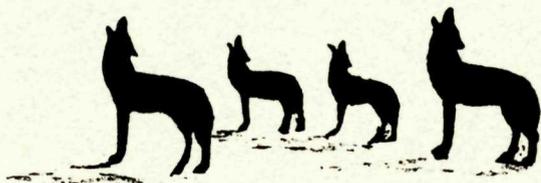
* (Irate footnote: The editor dislikes the term "Barbecuer," and says she anyhow doesn't know what it means. Obviously, she has not read famed historian Bernard De Voto's chronicle of the scandalous exploitation of The West during The Gilded Age, which until the 1980s was renowned as America's climax of corruption and greed. The "Great Barbecue" is what he called that earlier misrule by Republican presidents.)



WHEN A COYOTE HOWLS

when a coyote howls,
the air freezes,
all sounds cease,
the air the sun the world,
have been given to that one coyote,
but if man hides in a tree the brush or a clump
of grass,
all ears and faces will be turned toward him,
for the sound of a gunshot is ten times louder
than any howl

by Ellen Love
age 9



EDITOR'S NOTE: Reprinted with permission from *Wolf Tracks* (Fall, 1991), publication of Wolf Haven, International, Tenino, Wa. Wolf Haven, International is dedicated to wolf conservation. Membership, including Adopt-a-Wolf program is \$35; individual membership only \$20; family \$50. Call 1-800-448-9653. 3111 Offut Lake Road, Tenino, WA 98589

TRACKING A WOLF PACK

by Bobbi Neibauer

Editor's Note:

Bobbi Neibauer, a Wildlife Biotechnician for the United States Forest Service at the Lake Wenatchee Ranger District in the Wenatchee National Forest, recently returned from a trip into the Glacier Peak Wilderness with another Wildlife Biotechnician, Brian Ostwald. They were sent to do a historical visit on a wolf pack sighting from the previous year.

Dr. Paul Joslin, from Wolf Haven, asked her to share their experience with us. Their story follows:

"Our plan was to camp out for 4 days. Each day we planned to look for tracks, scat, or a kill. Each night we would perform howling surveys from designated areas that had been mapped out.

When we arrived, there was still a lot of snow. Most south-facing slopes were clear, but there was sizeable amounts of snow on the northern slopes and some of the ridgetops. This limited access to some areas we wanted to cover because of safety and time factors.

Our District Biologist, Heather Murphy, accompanied us for an overnight trip. She continued up from our base camp to check out the area before dusk. She returned later and reported tracks approximately 1-1/2 miles northwest.

The next day, we moved camp to a ridge overlooking the previous year's historical site about 2 miles away. I gathered firewood while Brian checked out the area and did some howling. He got a response down the ridge to the north, and a second came from the northwest.

By the time I ran back to camp and grabbed the tape recorder, camera, and notepad and returned, we were socked in with bad weather. High winds and clouds prevented anything from being heard, so we went back to camp hoping for better luck later.

The next day, the weather cleared. We planned to split up and cover as much area as possible. We would then howl that night on our way back. I was going to check for more tracks (where Heather had seen them before), and look for any sign of a kill throughout the basin. Brian was going to go to the last years' sight and check for any activity in the area.

As we didn't know how well our recorders would pick up sounds from a distance, I went back to the top of the peak Brian had gotten the response from, and he headed down the ridge into the timber.

Brian howled first. I could hear him, but it wasn't loud enough for a recording. We waited

approximately 10 minutes before I howled. Before I finished my first call we got an immediate response. The response was from 3-4 adults east of Brian. He moved downridge for a better position for recording while I stayed on the peak and worked the area with binoculars. The wolves were in timber, but I was hoping to see them run through an opening. They howled continuously for approximately 2 minutes before stopping. Brian howled once more, and they started right back up again in their pack chorus. Only, this time, we heard pups. They were running right for him, yipping, at full speed, and stopped approximately 30 yards away. As soon as they figured out he wasn't a wolf, they circled and retreated to the pack. Brian never got a visual, because he hunkered down so as not to scare them away. He did, however find their tracks. There were two pups, with one adult running with them. He lost his camera while running down the slope, so we didn't get any shots. There was one wolf just at the edge of an opening that he would have been able to see very clearly, but it never showed itself. It just howled back and forth to him, harmonizing with him, while the others were quiet. We listened for about an hour, but had no other responses. We did no other howling after the last response, trying to keep the disturbances to a minimal.

We left the area a day early, so as not to harass the animals.

We did manage to record about 10-15 seconds of a good howling response on tape, and got some good track measurements from the first day. Had we had a "Bionic Ear" (a disk-shaped, highly sensitive recording device), our recording would have been a lot clearer and more successful. (We have since purchased a Bionic Ear for our wildlife crew).

For me, that was one of the most exciting and fulfilling days in my life. Being able to be a part of something like that, knowing few people will ever get the chance to hear wolves in the wild, was definitely a privilege, not to be taken for granted. I am eagerly waiting and hoping for a chance to do it all again - next year....



Olympic Battleground: The Power Politics of Timber Preservation, Carsten Lien, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1991.

Reviewed by Phil Zalesky

Olympic Battleground is no wishy washy, middle course history of the Olympic Peninsula and Olympic National Park. This is gut shot to the solar plexus of all the nefarious dealings by individuals, industries, timber syndicates, politicians, bureaucrats and the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. The most warranted blows go to the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service and the punches, fittingly, become a devastating knockout. Some of yesterday's heroes such as Stephen Mather, Horace Albright, and Gifford Pinchot suffer calamitous concussions in historical perspective.

There are heroes in Lien's book, yes, but they are mostly those from the Emergency Conservation Committee of New York whose work was seminal in establishing Olympic National Park. It is mostly to three members of the Emergency Conservation Committee to whom we owe our present national park in its present size. The three include Willard Van Name, a scientist with the American Museum of Natural History; Rosalee Edge, a New York socialite; and Irving Brant, a St. Louis editorialist,

The book should be a lightning rod for conservation ire for all who believe mankind should have a gentle stewardship of the earth.

author of the highly acclaimed biography of James Madison, and a confidant of President Franklin Roosevelt, Harold Ickes, and Henry Wallace. Brant was a master at playing the political power game so necessary for successful progressive conservation activism.

What emerges from Carsten Lien's writing tells an exhaustively researched, thoroughly documented, and detailed story on how timber speculators and timber syndicates co-opted the peninsula, the politicians, the bureaucrats, and the local chambers

of commerce. Blood, sweat, and hundreds of documents have gone into telling this needed story. The national archives have been thoroughly combed over a twenty-five year period. Lien was trained as a historian. The vast archive search and the interviews with those from the Emergency Conservation Committee, thus, develop as the strength of the book.

It is an account of a conservation struggle laid out bluntly - a struggle explored and documented as national conservation history as well as local history. The book should be a lightning rod for conservation ire for all who believe mankind should have a gentle stewardship of the earth. If you aspire to participate in the conservation/environmental crusade, this book will be a bible telling you what and whom you may possibly encounter. Yesterday's tactics and opposition exemplify tactics and opposition facing future activists. Some of yesterday's quotations could have come from today's spotted owl controversy. To understand the present, we need to know about the past - a truism that is all too often forgotten. Lien reminds us of that past. He also reminds us that the story is not necessarily over.

You will find in the book an inside story: How the National Park Service itself fought the creation of Olympic National Park, the U.S. Forest Service role in resisting President Roosevelt over a park and how Roosevelt boxed the Service in. You will see how one notorious superintendent with congressional help kept trying to reduce the size of the park. When that failed, the superintendent with the encouragement of the director of the National Park Service implemented a policy to sell to gypo loggers and timber company "friends" some 100 million board feet or more of wood from the park. You will discover the citizen activists' inner story - the Emergency Conservation Committee at its core - of how this little group with the national interest in mind overcame the powerful influence of local politicians and the West Coast Lumbermen's Association

Even after the creation of the park, you will also note the struggles of more recent activists and activist groups such as Olympic Park Associates and the Mountaineers to hold on to the park's priceless natural resources even when the National Park Service, local congressional leaders, and the West

Coast Lumbermen's Association conspired together to reduce the acreage of the park to eliminate some of its finest character. All these meritorious descriptions being noted, I find Lien's inside story strongest when he is writing history where he has no personal involvement.

The book details one startling revelation after another. What follows is just one detailed part of the story of what might have been - what might have been the size of Olympic National Forest and the prevention of its rape. It has currency with today's battle over old growth forests.

Gifford Pinchot was no lover of preservation or national parks, for he wanted to utilize all resources in federal jurisdiction. Prevailing through his efforts

It forces us to ask ourselves whether we can be certain that the National Park Service has changed today. It forces us to think whether a battle won can be a victory completed.

was the setting aside of Forest Reserves - the forerunner of today's national forests. By his own efforts in visiting the frontier that was the Olympic Peninsula and personally scouting some of the areas, the Olympic Forest Reserve totalled 2,188,800 acres. John Muir noted that there would be trouble when in 1899 he prophesied, "The Olympic [Reserve] will be attacked again and again for its timber." And indeed it was and still faces such a threat.

But the "greedy forest grabbers," as Muir called them, stepped in to reduce the acreage to 1,466,840 acres and much of this was ice and rock. [A small part of this was later returned to the reserve.] This absorbed three-fourths of the wood forest volume. How did it happen? Look to the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company, a joint operation of James J. Hill and his neighbor Frederick Weyerhaeuser in St. Paul, the corrupt General Land Office in the Department of Interior, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

In the days when the state legislature named U.S. senators, the Hill, Weyerhaeuser, and St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company conspired to place Addison G. Foster, a partner in the lumber company, in the U.S. Senate. This special interest was the 500 pound gorilla of its day, and what they wanted from the state legislature they obtained.

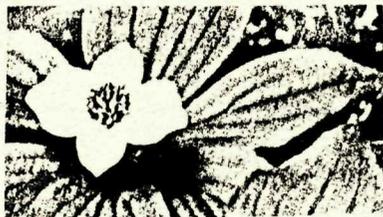
Senator Foster demanded the reduction of the Reserve purportedly for the benefit of the settlers [Numbering at the time eleven]. He lobbied to release the "vast *agriculture* lands that had been tied up by the outrageous act of creating an Olympic Park Reserve." On April 7, 1900 President McKinley by proclamation set up the reduction and the return of the land to public domain.

This now meant it was open to settlers. The principal settlers turned out to be Weyerhaeuser (15,560 acres), Milwaukee Railroad Land Company (80,630 acres), Simpson Logging Co. (12,360 acres), Polson Logging Co. (10,040 acres), Puget Milland Timber Co. (5,760 acres), Merrill and Ring (4,160 acres). With his goal completed, Senator Foster returned to his vice-presidency of St. Paul and Tacoma Timber Company.

What could have been a superior national forest was thus reduced by most of its timber volume. The private interests - these settlers - then raped their own private lands. A sustained yield produced by proper Forest Service management was decimated for an indefinite future.

You gasp at this? So did I! However, you will do a lot of gasping as Lien recounts one horror story after another. You will gasp at the extent of collusion of the National Park Service with the very interests that wanted to halt and destroy Olympic National Park. It forces us to ask ourselves as to whether we can be certain that the National Park Service has changed today? It forces us to think whether a battle won can be a victory completed.

But this is not just a story of the Olympic Peninsula; it is a history and a symbol of the conservation movement in the United States. I urge you to purchase the book, read it, and keep it for handy reference as you face off with other 500 pound gorillas.



THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PUGET SOUND COUNTRY by Arthur R. Kruckeberg, University of Washington Press, 1991. 468 pages, illus. \$40.00.

With this massive, lavishly illustrated and diagrammed work, Arthur Kruckeberg, professor emeritus of Botany at the University of Washington, has brought together in one volume all the knowledge that we who live in or visit Pugetopolis need to understand and appreciate our natural surroundings. Art, as he is affectionately known to his legions of friends, his many former students and the hundreds of AFIDS (Amateur Flower Identifiers) who have accompanied him on field trips into the Elysian Fields of Washington's mountain areas, is far more than the stereotypical botany professor -- he is the "father" of the Washington Native Plant Society, and editor for many years of its lively journal, *Douglasia*. His professional publications would define him as a phytogeographer, one who strives to understand the *reasons why* plants occur where they do. His world reputation rests on his pioneering discoveries of the relationship of certain plants to ultrabasic (serpentine) rocks. But over and above all this, Art is an *ecologist*, in the scientific, not pejorative sense, as the term is used by our more ignorant enemies.

A careful reading of his new book enables one to comprehend how all the natural features of our area hang together. As he points out in the preface, an essay in itself, the book is not a catalogue of living organisms around Puget Sound, but a story of the quality and variety of life, its connectedness and interdependencies. Much less painful and more lasting than Ecology 401!

Puget Sound country is defined by Dr. Kruckeberg from the geographer's viewpoint. It includes the drainage basin of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca plus the American San Juan Islands. This ten thousand square miles of infinitely varied geographic features extends from the crest of the North Cascades to the eastern slopes of the Olympics, from the Fraser River delta in the north to the low hills just south of Chehalis. To account for the profusion of life forms in the area, he begins his work with a chapter on the land forms and their "how come", essential to an understanding of the relationships of life with land. The descriptions of the geologic events that resulted in the creation of Washington state by the "smearing" of plate-borne microcontinents against the North American plate is particularly enlightening.

Other factors determining the nature of the life forms inhabiting Puget Sound country are weather, the day-by-day encounters with the vagaries of the layer of atmosphere that surrounds us, and climate, the long-term averaging of weather. This chapter does much to help us understand our generally benign but frequently exasperating climatic regime.

The chapters on the Inland Sea and marine life in Puget Sound seem astonishingly complete to the reviewer, who has known Dr. Kruckeberg only in his *persona* of botanist and plantsman. Similarly his chapters on animal life in the lowlands and mountain forested zones are worthy of the writings of any zoologist of my acquaintance.

An enthralling section covers in detail the topography and possible cause of the Mima Mounds, long an area of obvious fascination for Dr. Kruckeberg. He describes the various hypotheses: differential melting of ice and surface debris, permafrost polygons, post-Pleistocene runoff of glacial meltwater combined with the anchoring effect of vegetation, and earthquake waves in areas of loose soil on more stable substrates. Art, however, comes down firmly on the side of the "gopher theory", advanced by his long-time friend and fellow naturalist, Victor Scheffer, 50 years ago.

The book covers plant life of the lowland forests, non-forested areas and the montane regions as well as water and the quality of life, aboriginal Indians in the Puget Sound Basin and the European impact on Puget country. This book will prove to be an invaluable resource and tool for all who labor in the environmental field.

Of the Watching of Many Pots There Is No End

In the Beginning (the 1950s, that is), the long-established, broad-interest, Muir-inspired outdoor organizations found conservation soups boiling over in a myriad pots all over the land, too many to be simultaneously watched as attentively as necessary. As a response, in 1957 the N3C was formed (emulating the earlier Olympic Park Associates) to keep a constant eye on one specific pot -- the North Cascades (defined as the Cascade Range between the Columbia River and the Fraser River). The strategy proved so successful that pot-watching groups sprang up on every hand. A third of a century later the N3C finds itself in the good company of a splendid band of watchers or, as they are often called, "spearheads." (To expand the kitchen metaphor, the oven, too, must be watched. Remember what happened when King Alfred got lost in thoughts of how to fight the Danes. Long-range plans excite the imagination. But meanwhile don't let the oat cakes burn.)

Don't let the oat cakes burn, King Alfred!

For a full roster of pot-watchers, see *Washington Wildfire*, journal of the Washington Wilderness Coalition. For a membership/subscription, send \$25 (or, student/low-income, \$15) to Washington Wilderness Coalition, P.O. Box 45187, Seattle, WA 98145-0187.

The coalition umbrellas some four dozen groups. Among them is Friends of Loomis Forest, whose Jessica McNamara has an article in the November-December *Wildfire* that plucks most poignantly at the chords of N3C memory. In the late 1960s-early 1970s the N3C, The Mountaineers, and Sierra Club sought wilderness status for the farthest-east Cascades, prominently Chopaka Mountain. The campaign had substantial local support but not enough to budge the Okanogan Establishment or sway the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of the then reigning Bert ("Ol' King") Cole.

To our incredulous delight, last year we learned from Bob Rose, Chief of the Creative Ideas Department under Brian Boyle, head of the post-troglodyte DNR, of a proposal to put the largest part of Chopaka into a wilderness-like Natural Resources Conservation Area (see article in this issue) and that, moreover, the intention was to ultimately work a deal to hand it over to the U.S. Forest Service and extend the Pasayten Wilderness all the way east to the Chopaka scarp.

Why didn't it happen? Because the Creative Idea was hatched in Olympia, because the strong arm of the Boyle was enfeebled in the reach so far east, because the Northeast Regional Office in Colville retains many troglodytic features, and because the Okanogan Establishment is as ripsnorting ya-hoo as if the Ol' King still reigned.

But, to stir some better into the bitter, this pot which N3C lost track of over the years, the 150,000 acres of the DNR's Loomis Forest, now is fixed in the steady gaze of the Friends of Loomis Forest. (Chopaka is but one concern; the logging of subalpine forests is another.) The N3C looks forward to backing the play of the Friends in all Loomis affairs. Perhaps the N3C can put some squeeze on the Olympia DNR. Help sit on the Colville DNR. However, Ms. McNamara concludes, "It will probably be up to the courts to force the DNR to abandon its present course."

* * * *

Also of great interest in the November-December 1991 *Wildfire*:

Trees for Tomorrow??" -- A review of DNR progress in the Boyle Era (now ending)

and how very much farther the agency has to go under its new head, to be elected in November, 1992.

"The New Gold Rush" -- Discussion of the 4000-odd mineral claims in Ferry and Okanogan Counties, mostly on lands removed from the Colville Indian Reservation after gold was discovered there. Centurion Mines of Salt Lake City is exploring Flagg Mountain, southwest of the proposed (see below) Early Winters Ski Resort Complex. The company says the mineralized zone exceeds ten square miles!

"Hogback Basin at the Crossroads" -- The White Pass Ski Company's attempts to sleek up for yo-yos the pristine Hogback Basin and adjacent Miriam Basin.

* * * *

The January 10, 1992 *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* carried a front-page story of no less than 40 column inches announcing that the "developer" (that description of him has been seriously questioned) of the Early Winters Ski Resort "admits his project has run out of money." Says the *P.I.*, "Nearly \$12 million has been spent without producing a single permit for the mammoth project." -- And this despite the eagerness of the U.S. Forest Service and Okanogan County to inundate the Methow Valley with golfers, swimmers, tennis players, latte-sippers, tea-dancers, rathskellerers, and --- oh yes, skiers.

Let hats be doffed to the Methow Valley Citizens Council, formed in 1975 "to maintain and enhance present levels of water and air quality and wildlife populations." This is a spearhead that thrust its point right between the ribs.

The Council's newsletter (*The Valley Voice*) permits folks who love the valley but can't visit regularly to keep in touch. For membership and newsletter, send \$15 to Methow Valley Citizens Council, P.O. Box 774, Twisp, WA 98856.

Items in the Septemer-October and November-December 1991 issues include (aside from regular reports on Early Winters):

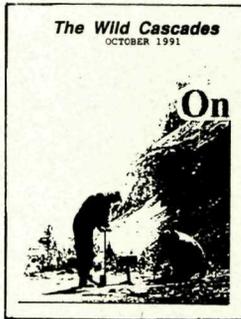
The proposed open-pit mine of Centurion Mines above Mazama has resulted the past summer in claim stakes all the way to the top of Fawn Peak, 2 air-miles northeast of the initial claims. Over the past century a number of companies have scouted that huge "ore" body. Some were real miners. Says *The Valley Voice*, "The last company to look at the site decided the venture might not be profitable and found a prohibitive amount of environmental and water supply problems. . . ." It is quite possible that Centurion might have a few shares of stock available for purchase, if you hurry.

"Big Valley Ranch Saved" is a headlined piece of very good news. November 18, the state Wildlife Department bought the 845-acre Big Valley (Heath) Ranch, using funds supplied by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition. Some 412 acres of the tract, located between Winthrop and Mazama along 3-1/2 miles of the Methow River, are riparian habitat and will be "off limits to anything other than wild critters and the occasional (school) class," according to John Hayes, a founder of Methow Institute Foundation, which spearheaded the state purchase. Said Hayes, "At the same time that we were working to preserve Big Valley Ranch, the state Department of Trade and Economic Development was trying to push it as prime destination resort land." This is the same agency that under the cover of darkness tried to make a deal to build a Mitsubishi golf course on state lands along the Strait of Juan de Fuca. (A comment has been received from the Irate Birdwatcher: "Destination resort! The buzz phrase of the New Age Barbecuers!")

* * * *

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

LETTERS



On The Greening of Cascade Pass (*The Wild Cascades*, October, 1991)

1234 22nd Avenue E.
Seattle, WA 98112
October 9, 1991

North Cascades Conservation Council
Post Office Box 95980
University Station
Seattle, WA 98145-1980

Dear NCCC:

I am writing to ask you to take me off the mailing list for the Wild Cascades. I can no longer call myself a supporter of your organization or goals. -

The last straw for me was your recent article summarizing "greening" efforts at Cascade Pass during the last 20 or so years. I am tired of efforts to transplant a city garden mentality to the mountains. I visited Cascade Pass many times in the late 60's, and cannot recall ever being put off by the "human impact" with which you are so concerned. However, I have been very much put off by other things. The most recent event stands out most clearly. Two years ago, I went with three friends on a 5 day backpack trip, Big Beaver - Whatcom - Challenger - Wiley - Little Beaver. During this trip, we saw only one other human being. This was a park ranger who came up to tell us that the campsite that we had selected several hundred feet up from Whatcom Pass was unacceptable, and that we had to move several hundred feet further up the ridge.

My point is that the cure has become worse than the disease, if indeed the disease ever existed at all. I can tell you from firsthand experience that a single person, acting in the role of a policeman, feels like much more of a crowd than a score of ordinary hikers. The ranger in my little story had the approximate impact of a helicopter landing. Prior to his appearance, we were thoroughly enjoying the illusion of being "in the wilderness".

I am saddened that the pristine school of thought has (apparently) become park policy. It is ironic that in 1968, I thought that we were saving the North Cascades by putting them in the park. Now, I am deeply grateful for the many fine areas that were left out.

Yours truly,

Michael Toner

Michael Toner

cc: John J Ernst

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NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL
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THE NORTH CASCADES CONSERVATION COUNCIL is a non-profit, non-tax-deductible organization dedicated to protecting the North Cascades. Regular and family memberships are \$15/\$20 per year, including subscription to *The Wild Cascades*, published (currently) three times a year: October, February and June.

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